Title: Regarding participation of opposition parties in Lok Sabha proceedings.

11.02 hrs

OBSERVATION BY THE SPEAKER

Participation of Opposition Parties in Lok Sabha Proceedings

SHRI KINJARAPU YERRANNAIDU (SRIKAKULAM): Sir, I would like to say something.

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Yerrannaidu, I will call you after this observation.

Hon. Members, at the outset, let me welcome the hon. Members belonging to the Telugu Desam Party (TDP), who have decided to attend the proceedings of the House.

As the Speaker of the House of People, I cannot, but express my deep sense of disappointment at the decision taken by the Opposition Parties to continue to remain absent from the House. Since the decision of boycott by the Opposition Parties, I have been, almost every day, requesting them to come and participate in the proceedings. On my behalf, I have assured them that I shall allow all the issues, which are permitted by the Rules, to be discussed on the floor of the House.

Lok Sabha is the House of the People. It does not belong either to the Government or to any particular Section of the House. The Speaker's duty is to see that the House performs in accordance with the Rules and Procedures of Business, so that the objectives for which the Lok Sabha has been constituted are fulfilled.

I feel it will be an unwarranted exercise of power of the Speaker if he meddles into the political affairs or the political formulations of any Party or Group of Parties, and seeks to intervene. It has been suggested by my friends in the Opposition that I should have written to the hon. Prime Minister on the issue of what is called 'the grievances of the Opposition against the Government and the Treasury Benches'. According to me, it would have been an intrusion by the Speaker into an arena, which should be left to the political parties to decide and resolve.

Apart from the daily requests, both verbally through the media and also by letters addressed to the hon. Chairperson of the NDA as also to the hon. Leader of Opposition, I have been inviting the hon. Leaders of all the political parties -- including those Parties boycotting the proceedings -- every morning for a meeting before the start of the proceedings of the day to come back; but, unfortunately, without the desired result.

I once again request all my friends in the House to take part in the proceedings in a manner for which there are ample Rules and Procedures available to us.

SHRI KINJARAPU YERRANNAIDU : Mr. Speaker, Sir, my party had been boycotting the Parliamentary proceedings ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Mr. Athawale, please do not do it. This is not proper. This is a very solemn matter, and a very important issue.

SHRI KINJARAPU YERRANNAIDU : Mr. Speaker, Sir, my party had been boycotting the Parliamentary proceedings since 27 April till yesterday.

However, on Monday, I have participated in the debate on the Finance Bill, 2005. What is deplorable is their hostile and vindictive attitude. In a healthy democracy, the role of the Opposition is most important. Without the Opposition, there is no parliamentary democracy. The UPA Government should treat the Opposition like friends and not as enemies because then only parliamentary democracy will survive.

My Party has decided to raise some important issues on the floor of the House. While condemning the hostile and vindictive attitude of the Government, we would like to participate in the parliamentary proceedings. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Hon. Member, please sit down. You should give up this attitude of interrupting others.

SHRI KINJARAPU YERRANNAIDU : I am expressing my views. ...(*Interruptions*)

MR. SPEAKER: Nothing will be recorded except Shri Kinjarapu Yerrannaidu's statement.

(Interruptions) â€¦*

DR. M. JAGANNATH (NAGAR KURNOOL): He should be given the freedom to express his views. Why are they interrupting him?

MR. SPEAKER: I am giving that freedom; you have that freedom. If anybody interferes with that, I am there to control. I want to make it clear that the habit of interrupting each other will not be tolerated.

SHRI KINJARAPU YERRANNAIDU : While condemning the attitude of the Government, we would like to participate in the parliamentary proceedings under pressure.

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): Sir, I would just like to point out one thing. I had no intention of intervening. I entirely agree with your observation, and on behalf of the Government, I would like to assure you that whatever be your directions, we will follow it. Even when this *impasse* began, at the beginning, the Prime Minister talked to the Leaders of the Opposition of both the Houses and the Chairperson of NDA and requested them to participate in the proceedings of the House. As the Leader of the House, umpteen number of times, I have appealed to them through media that they should participate. They are all along insisting that only the Prime Minister should go on repeating the appeal. We do not consider the NDA as our enemy. Political opponents are there in a parliamentary democracy. There would be dissension; there would be divergence of views, and we respect the divergence of views. It is not necessary that we should agree with it, but we must have respect to each other's view, which you have repeatedly emphasised.

* Not Recorded.

I join you in requesting the Leaders of the Opposition parties to participate in the debate. On behalf of the Government, I can assure them that whatever they want to discuss, which is permitted by you under the rules, the Government will be prepared to provide time. I am, again, appealing to them to participate in the proceedings of the House.

MR. SPEAKER: I think, this is the spirit which should permeate every side. I, once again, as I have already said, request them to reconsider their decision.